

the proposed action will not take place. If no action would result in other predictable actions, those actions should be discussed within the no action alternative section. The discussion of the no action alternative and the other alternatives should be comparable in detail to that of the proposed action.

§ 989.9 Cooperation and adoption.

(a) *Lead and Cooperating Agency (40 CFR 1501.5-1501.6).* When the Air Force is a cooperating agency in the preparation of an EIS, the Air Force reviews and approves principal environmental documents within the EIAP as if they were prepared by the Air Force. The Air Force executes a Record of Decision for its program decisions that are based on an EIS for which the Air Force is a cooperating agency. The Air Force may also be a lead or cooperating agency on an EA using similar procedures, but the MAJCOM EPC retains approval authority unless otherwise directed by HQ USAF. Before invoking provisions of 40 CFR 1501.5(e), the lowest authority level possible resolves disputes concerning which agency is the lead or cooperating agency.

(b) *Adoption of EA or EIS.* The Air Force, even though not a cooperating agency, may adopt an EA or EIS prepared by another entity where the proposed action is substantially the same as the action described in the EA or EIS. In this case, the EA or EIS must be recirculated as a final EA or EIS but the Air Force must independently review the EA or EIS and determine that it is current and that it satisfies the requirements of this part. The Air Force then prepares its own FONSI or ROD, as the case may be. In the situation where the proposed action is not substantially the same as that described in the EA or the EIS, the Air Force may adopt the EA or EIS, or a portion thereof, by circulating the EA or EIS as a draft and then preparing the final EA or EIS.

§ 989.10 Tiering.

The Air Force should use tiered (40 CFR 1502.20) environmental documents, and environmental documents prepared by other agencies, to eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues and to focus on the issues relating to spe-

cific actions. If the Air Force adopts another Federal agency's environmental document, subsequent Air Force environmental documents may also be tiered.

§ 989.11 Combining EIAP with other documentation.

(a) The EPF combines environmental analysis with other related documentation when practicable (40 CFR 1506.4) following the procedures prescribed by the CEQ regulations and this part.

(b) The EPF must integrate comprehensive planning (AFI 32-7062, Air Force Comprehensive Planning)⁷ with the requirements of NEPA and the EIAP. Prior to making a decision to proceed, the EPF must analyze the environmental impacts that could result from implementation of a proposal identified in the comprehensive plan.

§ 989.12 Air Force Form 813, request for environmental impact analysis.

The Air Force uses AF Form 813 to document the need for environmental analysis or for certain CATEX determinations for proposed actions. The form helps narrow and focus the issues to potential environmental impacts. AF Form 813 must be retained with the EA or EIS to record the focusing of environmental issues. The rationale for not addressing environmental issues must also be recorded in the EA or EIS.

§ 989.13 Categorical exclusion.

(a) CATEXs apply to those classes of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have potential for significant effect on the environment and do not, therefore, require further environmental analysis in an EA or an EIS. The list of Air Force-approved CATEXs is in attachment 2 of this part. Command supplements to this part may not add CATEXs or expand the scope of the CATEXs in attachment 2 of this part.

(b) Characteristics of categories of actions that usually do not require either an EIS or an EA (in the absence of extraordinary circumstances) include:

- (1) Minimal adverse effect on environmental quality.
- (2) No significant change to existing environmental conditions.

⁷See footnote 1 to § 989.1.

(3) No significant cumulative environmental impact.

(4) Socioeconomic effects only.

(5) Similarity to actions previously assessed and found to have no significant environmental impacts.

(c) CATEXs apply to actions in the United States and abroad. General exemptions specific to actions abroad are in 32 CFR Part 187. The EPF or other decision-maker forwards requests for additional exemption determinations for actions abroad to HQ USAF/CEV with a justification letter.

(d) Normally, any decision-making level may determine the applicability of a CATEX and need not formally record the determination on AF Form 813 or elsewhere, except as noted in the CATEX list.

(e) Application of a CATEX to an action does not eliminate the need to meet air conformity requirements (see § 989.28).

§ 989.14 Environmental assessment.

(a) When a proposed action is one not usually requiring an EIS but is not categorically excluded, the EPF must prepare an EA (40 CFR 1508.9). Every EA must lead to either a FONSI, a decision to prepare an EIS, or no decision on the proposal.

(b) Whenever a proposed action usually requires an EIS, the EPF responsible for the EIAP may prepare an EA to definitively determine if an EIS is required based on the analysis of environmental impacts. Alternatively, the EPF may choose to bypass the EA and proceed with preparation of an EIS.

(c) An EA is a written analysis that:

(1) Provides analysis sufficient to determine whether to prepare an EIS or a FONSI.

(2) Aids the Air Force in complying with the NEPA when no EIS is required.

(d) An EA discusses the need for the proposed action, reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, the affected environment, the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives (including the "no action" alternative), and a listing of agencies and persons consulted during preparation.

(e) The format for the EA is the same as the EIS. The alternatives section of

an EA and an EIS are similar and should follow the alternatives analysis guidance outlined in § 989.8.

(f) The EPF should design the EA to facilitate rapidly transforming the document into an EIS if the environmental analysis reveals a significant impact.

(g) Certain EAs require SAF/MIQ approval because they involve topics of special importance or interest. Unless directed otherwise by SAF/MIQ, the EPF must forward the following types of EAs to SAF/MIQ through HQ USAF/CEV (copy to AFCEE/EC for technical review), along with an unsigned FONSI:

(1) EAs for actions where the Air Force has wetlands or floodplains compliance responsibilities (E.O. 11988 and E.O. 11990). A Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) must be submitted to HQ USAF/CEV when the alternative selected is located in wetlands or floodplains, and must discuss why no other practical alternative exists to avoid impacts. See AFI 32-7064, Integrated Resources Management.⁸

(2) System acquisition EAs.

(3) All EAs on non-Air Force agency proposals that require an Air Force decision, such as use of Air Force property for highways and joint-use proposals.

(4) EAs for actions that require the Air Force to make conformity determinations pursuant to the Clean Air Act, as amended, and the implementing rules. Conformity determinations are made by SAF/MIQ, see § 989.28.

(5) EAs where mitigation to insignificance is accomplished in lieu of initiating an EIS (§ 989.22(c)).

(h) A few examples of actions that normally require preparation of an EA (except as indicated in the CATEX list) include:

(1) Public land withdrawals of less than 5,000 acres.

(2) Minor mission realignments and aircraft beddowns.

(3) Building construction on base within developed areas.

(4) Minor modifications to Military Operating Areas (MOA), air-to-ground weapons ranges, and military training routes.

⁸See footnote 1 to § 989.1.